

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS:NATO,PFOR, SP
SUBJECT: SPAIN AND NATO
REF.: (A) NATO 1361; (B) STATE 17342

1. DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES MISSION'S CONTINUED INTEREST
IN EFFORTS TO MOVE SPAIN CLOSER TO NATO. HOWEVER, WE DO
NOT THINK THAT CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NOW RIGHT FOR US TO
INITIATE THE KIND OF BROAD EVALUATION OF SPAIN'S RELATION-
SHIP TO NATO MENTIONED IN REFTELS.

2. IT IS TRUE THAT PRIME MINISTER AAS' MAIDEN SPEECH TO
CORTES WAS REASONABLY WELL RECEIVED, BOTH IN SPAIN AND
AMONG ALLIES. SPEECH WAS, INDEED, THE MOST FORTHCOMING
GOS PRONOUNCEMENT ON DOMESTIC ISSUES IN RECENT MEMORY.
AND MOST OBSERVERS WERE PREPARED TO GIVE THE NEW GOVERN-

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MENT TIME TO PROVE IT MEANT WHAT IT SAID. UNFORTUNATELY

GOS OVER-REACTION IN DISPUTE WITH CHURCH OVER RECENT PASTORAL LETTER OF BISHOP OF BILBAO, COUPLED WITH EXECUTION BY GARROTING OF ANARCHIST STUDENT IN BARCELONA, HAVE PROBABLY SERVED TO DISSIPATE MUCH OF GOOD WILL WHICH INITIAL POLICY SPEECH AROUSED AMONG WESTERN EUROPEANS.

3. AT THIS POINT WE HAVE NOT COMMENCED FORMAL BASE NEGOTIATIONS AND SEE NO PARTICULAR REASON TO DISCUSS SPANISH QUESTION IN NATO SPECIFICALLY FROM ASPECT OF BASE NEGOTIATIONS. ON THE OTHER HAND, ONCE INTO THESE

NEGOTIATIONS, GOS MAY WELL ASK THAT US PUSH SPANISH CASE WITH ALLIES AS PART OF POLITICAL QUID PRO QUO FOR BASES, AND WE SHOULD NOT GIVE AWAY THIS CARD IN ADVANCE.

4. ALTHOUGH GIBRALTAR DISPUTE ONCE AGAIN SEEMS TO BE ON BACK BURNER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THIS FACT WOULD ALTER NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD ANY INITIATIVE WITH SPAIN WHICH NEW WILSON GOVERNMENT SEEMS MOST LIKELY TO BE CARRYING AS PART OF STANDARD LABOR PARTY IDEOLOGICAL BAGGAGE.

5. DEPARTMENT BELIEVES IT PREFERABLE TO WAIT AND SEE IF ARIAS DELIVERS IN ANY MEANINGFUL MANNER ON HIS FAIRLY SPECIFIC PROMISES TO LIBERALIZE DOMESTIC POLITICAL SYSTEM. IF HE DOES, WE WOULD THEN BE IN MUCH STRONGER POSITION TO URGE ALLIES TO CONFRONT THE SPANISH ISSUE SQUARELY. RUSH

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